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The Seven Kids. A fairy tale for children. By Adelheid Wette. Incidental music by Engelbert Humperdinck. [Magdeburg: Heinrichshofen's Verlag.]

THE phenomenal success of "Hänsel und Gretel" has indissolubly connected Herr Humperdinck's name with fairy tales, and his happy treatment of these stories which never grow old naturally gives rise to considerable expectations when he comes forward as a composer of light music. "The Seven Kids" can scarcely be compared with "Hänsel und Gretel," for it only consists of six numbers, and the work may be adequately performed in the Theatre Royal Back Drawing-room. The characters are a goat, seven kids, and a wolf; and the action commences by *Mrs. Goat* leaving home to search for food and bidding the kids keep the door bolted until she returns. Shortly after her departure the wolf arrives and endeavours to persuade the kids to let him in by pretending to be their mother. They, however, demand to see his paws, and when he shows them they detect the impostor, as they are black instead of white. But *Mr. Wolf*, like another person of evil intentions, is persevering; he pays a visit to the miller and gets his paws covered with flour, which perfectly convinces the giddy kids that their respected mamma has returned, the result being that the kids become part of the wolf. The voracious monster has, however, eaten hastily—in fact, he has bolted the kids whole, and when *Mrs. Goat* returns she sets them free by the pointed application of her scissors. Out of consideration for the wolf's feelings she fills up the vacuum with stones, which seem to be equally satisfying to the wolf's appetite, saving that it makes him feel thirsty, and with fatal results, for when he goes to the brook the weight of the stones causes him to lose his balance and come to an unexpected end; whereupon *Mrs. Goat* moralises:

Oh, you greedy gormandiser,
What a pity you weren't wiser.
Mr. Wolf, so false and sly,
In the river now you lie!

The first song is sung by one of the kids and is very characteristic of Herr Humperdinck's folk-song style. The second number is sung by the wolf and is written for baritone or alto and is more declamatory. This is followed by a lively two-part song for the kids. The goat heralds her approach by singing a measure in minuet time, the wolf has a brief monologue concerning his internal feelings, and the work is concluded with a gay chorus by the kids. An excellent English translation of the German text has been provided by Miss Constance Bache, and the brief dialogue between the vocal numbers could be easily committed to memory.

The Office of the Holy Communion. Set to music in the key of E flat. By Charles Macpherson. [Novello and Company, Limited.]

MR. CHARLES MACPHERSON is one of our most gifted and promising young musicians, and this setting of the Communion Service witnesses to his excellent training and musicianship. The composer has taken a very earnest view of his subject. The music has, in a measure, affinity to the old Italian school of Palestrina, and is characterised by great nobility and loftiness of conception. This is at once noticeable in the Kyrie, which is somewhat severe but decidedly impressive. The Credo is opened by the choir in unison with a phrase to which frequent recurrence is made, and is of a character which at once imprints itself on the memory. A brief interlude prepares the way for the section "Who for us men," which is very expressively set. The choral writing goes into six parts in some of the chords at the delivery of the sentence "And the third day," and the initial phrase is allied to the sentence "I believe in the Holy Ghost." The Sanctus possesses considerable distinctiveness, and is written for the most part on a pedal bass. The Benedictus is manifestly intended to be opened by a quartet of soloists, whose phrases are subsequently repeated by the choir, the number being closed by a vigorous treatment of the word "Hosanna." The music allied to the Agnus Dei possesses great beauty of a tranquil character, especially at the close. The Gloria begins in a vigorous fashion, contains much clever contrapuntal writing, and concludes with a fugue in four parts which is developed in a terse and masterly style.

Cinderella. An Operetta for Schools and Classes. Words by Shapcott Wensley. Music composed by Georges Jacobi. (Novello's School Series. Edited by W. G. McNaught.) [Novello and Company, Limited.]

"CINDERELLA" is the queen of fairy stories, and its charm and humour is set forth in attractive fashion in this operetta. It consists of two acts comprising three scenes, the latter severally being a kitchen, an apartment in the *Prince's* palace, and the garden of *Cinderella's* house. There are nine principal parts, that of the heroine, her two sisters, somewhat satirically named *Patience* and *Charity*, the all-powerful *Fairy Godmother*, the very necessary *Prince*, the no less needful *Papa*, a courtier (*Lady Guy*), a short spoken part, and an *Attendant*, which is also a spoken part. The familiar but ever fresh story is told by these characters in speech and song in a bright and humorous manner, the dialogue being commendably terse and easy to remember. Mr. Jacobi's music, as may be expected from so practised a musician in dance rhythms, is full of life and gaiety, and opens with an overture, *tempo di Minuetto*, of attractive and graceful character. It is followed by a two-part chorus, a considerable portion of which is in unison for the voices. This is succeeded by some lively conversation between *Charity* and *Patience*, of an uncharitable and impatient nature, which terminates in a duet sung by the sisters, who subsequently dance a gavotte. The entrance of *Papa* leads to some exercises in deportment and short solos for the father and his eldest daughters. *Cinderella* being left alone also gives expression to her feelings in a song, which is answered by the fairies calling behind the scenes and by the entrance of the *Fairy Godmother*, who arrives with a troop of white fairies who sing some charming choruses, and the act closes with the departure of *Cinderella* for the all-eventful ball. The second act begins with a repetition of the opening bars of the work, transposed from the key of A to that of C, and is continued by a melodiously written duet for *Charity* and *Patience* and chorus of the courtiers in praise of the *Prince*, who, when he enters, sings a lively song of martial character. A Lady of the Court leads off another chorus in which she and the courtiers gossip about *Cinderella* and her fascination of the *Prince*. The fairies also sing a warning song, and the scene closes with the flight of *Cinderella*. The last scene opens with some amusing dialogue, the *Prince* with his courtiers enter as strolling minstrels, and justify their appearance by singing a dainty ditty. The *Prince* himself has brought the slipper, and, while it is being tried on, more choruses are sung interspersed with dialogue, ending with a jubilant choral number, "Sweet Cinderella, all joy be thine," which concludes one of the best examples of this excellent series.

MUSIC IN BIRMINGHAM.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

OUR musical season commenced with a week of popular concerts organised by Mr. D. French Davis, the well-known harpist, conductor, and bandmaster, given in the Town Hall from the 3rd to the 8th ult. He had under his baton a well-balanced orchestra of forty-five excellent performers, with Mr. Fred. Ward as leader. The programmes were of a distinctly popular character, but the venture proved a heavy financial failure. On the 10th ult. Mr. Davis transferred his orchestra to the Curzon Hall, where he entered upon a five weeks' season of similar concerts. Madame Adelina Patti appeared at Messrs. Harrison's first concert of the current series on Monday, the 10th ult., with her customary success.

The Birmingham Festival Choral Society inaugurated its season with a performance of Berlioz's "Faust," given in the Town Hall on the 13th ult., under Dr. Swinnerton Heap's conductorship, the principal parts being entrusted to the safe keeping of Miss Rosina Hammacott, Mr. Charles Saunders (the Australian tenor), Mr. Charles Knowles, and Mr. Andrew Black. Dr Heap took the *tempi* much faster than is customary, which certainly enhanced the colouring of some of the scenes, but marred others. The Easter Hymn and the fugue on *Brander's* song were superbly given by the choir, but the scene in Pandemonium, preceded by that terrible ride terminating

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